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# Bishop Francis Asbury in West Virginia\*

By Lawrence Sherwood

## Introduction

"Whither am I going? To the New World. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No: I am going to live to God, and to bring others so to do."

So Francis Asbury (1745-1816) wrote in his *Journal* on September 12, 1771 as he was starting from England to America. In the next forty-five years he not only was to be the dominant force in the shaping of American Methodism as its pioneer Bishop; he also was to become one of the greatest explorers of the American frontier.

## His Journal

Asbury's part in the life of pioneer America and his observations of people and places have been in large measure hidden to recent generations. Asbury kept a daily diary or *Journal* from August 7, 1771 until December 7, 1815. Portions of this *Journal* were published during his life. The entire *Journal* was published in 1821. It was reprinted in 1852, and again reprinted about two years later. It had, thus, by 1958 been out of print for more than a hundred years, and copies had become increasingly difficult to obtain. Little wonder that present-day persons had scant knowledge of his life and importance.

Certain scholars in America knew of his *Journal* and of its meaning not only as a commentary on the beginnings of The Methodist Church, but also as a first-hand record of men and movements in the early days of the United States. Thus, when the National Historical Publications Commission of the United States Government chose sixty-six great Americans whose works should be edited and published, Asbury's name was included. The recommendation that this Commission made in 1961 was accepted by two Presidents and both Houses of Congress.

Through the recommendation and cooperation of the World Methodist Council, the *Journal* and *Letters of Francis Asbury*

\* A paper presented by the writer at the annual meeting of the West Virginia Historical Society, Charleston, West Virginia, October 19, 1962.



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It was found upon examination that the man was terribly injured. The left arm was broken in two places, several ribs were broken, his nose was cleft in twain and there was an ugly cut on the forehead. No money was found on his person. Among the papers found in his possession was a ticket from the chief of Police of Chicago and also

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## **Greenbrier Independent.**

**THURSDAY, JULY 27TH, 1893.**

### **LOCAL MATTERS.**

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**ALL the teachers are invited to call on J. E. Bell for dry goods, etc.**

**THE levy for county**

**THE Monroe Watch**  
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